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SIPDIS

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CENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OIIP KMDR PTER KISL YM

SUBJECT: YEMENI MEDIA REACTION TO RETRACTION OF NEWSWEEK
MAGAZINE REPORT ALLEGING DESECRATION OF KORAN BY U.S.
INTERROGATORS AT GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA.

REF: STATE 00088240

¶1. SUMMARY: Yemeni media reporting of the retraction by Newsweek of its story alleging desecration of the Koran in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, is thus far fairly widespread and straightforward. Notable exceptions are official media outlets Saba News Agency and Al-Thawra newspaper. END SUMMARY

¶2. The Newsweek retraction of a May 9, 2005 report alleging the desecration of the Koran by American soldiers at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba was reported on May 17 by Aden-based Al-Ayyam independent daily, Al-Sahwa Net (news website of Islah), the Defense Ministry-run news website 26 September, and even by sensationalist Akhbar Al-Yawm independent daily. All reports were fair and straightforward. Along with the Newsweek retraction (which was published in full by Al-Ayyam and partly by the others) Al-Ayyam quoted doubts in Afghanistan and Pakistan on the retraction.

¶3. Official media, such as Al-Thawra and Saba News Agency, however, did not publish the Newsweek retraction. On the contrary, Saba News Agency published on May 17 a strongly worded statement by the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia condemning the alleged Koran desecration and demanding that those responsible for the desecration receive a deterring punishment.

KRAJESKI